

PSALM XCI.

This Psalm is without a title, and we have no means of ascertaining either the name of its writer, or the date of its composition, with certainty. The Jewish doctors consider that when the author's name is not mentioned we may assign the Psalm to the last-named writer; and, if so, this is another Psalm of Moses, the man of God. Many expressions here used are similar to those of Moses in Deuteronomy, and the internal evidence, from the peculiar idioms, would point towards him as the composer. The continued lives of Joshua and Caleb, who followed the Lord fully, make remarkably apt illustrations of this Psalm, for they, as a reward for abiding in continued nearness to the Lord, lived on "amongst the dead, amid their graves." For these reasons it is by no means improbable that this Psalm may have been written by Moses, but we dare not dogmatize. If David's pen was used in giving us this matchless ode, we cannot believe as some do that he thus commemorated the plague which devastated Jerusalem on account of his numbering the people. For him, then, to sing of himself as seeing "the reward of the wicked" would be clean contrary to his declaration, "I have sinned, but these sheep, what have they done?"; and the absence of any allusion to the sacrifice upon Zion could not be in any way accounted for, since David's repentance would inevitably have led him to dwell upon the atoning sacrifice and the sprinkling of blood by the hyssop.

In the whole collection there is not a more cheering Psalm, its tone is elevated and sustained throughout, faith is at its best, and speaks nobly. A German physician was wont to speak of it as the best preservative in times of cholera, and in truth it is a heavenly medicine against plague and pest. He who can live in its spirit will be fearless, even if once again London should become a lazaret-house, and the grave be gorged with carcasses.

DIVISION.—On this occasion we shall follow the divisions which our translators have placed at the head of the Psalm, for they are pithy and suggestive. 1. The state of the godly. 3. Their safety. 9. Their habitation. 11. Their servants. 14. Their friend; with the effects of them all.

EXPOSITION.

HE that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

2 I will say of the LORD, *He is my refuge and my fortress*: my God; in him will I trust.

1. "*He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High.*" The blessings here promised are not for all believers, but for those who live in close fellowship with God. Every child of God looks towards the inner sanctuary and the mercy-seat, yet all do not *dwell* in the most holy place; they run to it at times, and enjoy occasional approaches, but they do not habitually reside in the mysterious presence. Those who through rich grace obtain unusual and continuous communion with God, so as to abide in Christ and Christ in them, become possessors of rare and special benefits, which are missed by those who follow afar off, and grieve the Holy Spirit of God. Into the secret place those only come who know the love of God in Christ Jesus, and those only *dwell* there to whom to live is Christ. To them the veil is rent, the mercy-seat is revealed, the covering cherubs are manifest, and the awful glory of the Most High is apparent: these, like Simeon, have the Holy Ghost upon them, and like Anna they depart not from the temple; they are the courtiers of the Great King, the valiant men who keep watch around the bed of Solomon, the virgin souls who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. Elect out of the elect, they have "attained unto the first three," and shall walk with their Lord in white, for they are worthy. Sitting down in the august presence-chamber where shines the mystic light of the Sheekinah, they know what it is to be raised up together, and to be made to sit together with Christ in the heavenlies, and of them it is truly said that their conversation is in heaven. Special grace like theirs brings with it special immunity. Outer court worshippers little know what

belongs to the inner sanctuary, or surely they would press on until the place of nearness and divine familiarity became theirs. Those who are the Lord's constant guests shall find that he will never suffer any to be injured within his gates; he has eaten the covenant salt with them, and is pledged for their protection.

"*Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*" The Omnipotent Lord will shield all those who dwell with him, they shall remain under his care as guests under the protection of their host. In the most holy place the wings of the cherubim were the most conspicuous objects, and they probably suggested to the Psalmist the expression here employed. Those who commune with God are safe with him, no evil can reach them, for the outstretched wings of his power and love cover them from all harm. This protection is constant—they *abide* under it, and it is all-sufficient, for it is the shadow of the *Almighty*, whose omnipotence will surely screen them from all attack. No shelter can be imagined at all comparable to the protection of Jehovah's own shadow. The Almighty himself is where his shadow is, and hence those who dwell in his secret place are shielded by himself. What a shade in the day of noxious heat! What a refuge in the hour of deadly storm! Communion with God is safety. The more closely we cling to our Almighty Father the more confident may we be.

2. "*I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress.*" To take up a general truth and make it our own by personal faith is the highest wisdom. It is but poor comfort to say 'the Lord is a refuge,' but to say he is *my* refuge, is the essence of consolation. Those who believe should also speak—"I will say," for such bold avowals honour God and lead others to seek the same confidence. Men are apt enough to proclaim their doubts, and even to boast of them, indeed there is a party nowadays of the most audacious pretenders to culture and thought, who glory in casting suspicion upon everything; hence it becomes the duty of all true believers to speak out and testify with calm courage to their own well-grounded reliance upon their God. Let others say what they will, be it ours to say of the Lord, "he is our *refuge.*" But what we say we must prove by our actions, we must fly to the Lord for shelter, and not to an arm of flesh. The bird flies away to the thicket, and the fox hastens to its hole, every creature uses its refuge in the hour of danger, and even so in all peril or fear of peril let us flee unto Jehovah, the Eternal Protector of his own. Let us, when we are secure in the Lord, rejoice that our position is unassailable, for he is our *fortress* as well as our refuge. No moat, portcullis, draw-bridge, wall, battlement and donjon, could make us so secure as we are when the attributes of the Lord of Hosts environ us around. Behold this day the Lord is to us instead of walls and bulwarks! Our ramparts defy the leagured hosts of hell. Foes in flesh, and foes in ghostly guise are alike baulked of their prey when the Lord of Hosts stands between us and their fury, and all other evil forces are turned aside. Walls cannot keep out the pestilence, but the Lord can.

As if it were not enough to call the Lord his refuge and fortress, he adds, "*My God! in him will I trust.*" Now he can say no more; "my God" means all, and more than all, that heart can conceive by way of security. It was most meet that he should say "in him will I trust," since to deny faith to such a one were wilful wickedness and wanton insult. He who dwells in an impregnable fortress, naturally trusts in it; and shall not he who dwells in God feel himself well at ease, and repose his soul in safety? O that we more fully carried out the Psalmist's resolve! We have trusted in God, let us trust him still. He has never failed us, why then should we suspect him? To trust in man is natural to fallen nature, to trust in God should be as natural to regenerated nature. Where there is every reason and warrant for faith, we ought to place our confidence without hesitancy or wavering. Dear reader, pray for grace to say, "In *him* will I trust."

3 Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, *and* from the noisome pestilence.

4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth *shall be thy* shield and buckler.

5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; *nor* for the arrow that flieth by day;

6 *Nor* for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; *nor* for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

7 A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand ;
but it shall not come nigh thee.

8 Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.

3. "*Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler.*" Assuredly no subtle plot shall succeed against one who has the eyes of God watching for his defence. We are foolish and weak as poor little birds, and are very apt to be lured to our destruction by cunning foes, but if we dwell near to God, he will see to it that the most skilful deceiver shall not entrap us.

"Satan the fowler who betrays
 Unguarded souls a thousand ways,"

shall be foiled in the case of the man whose high and honourable condition consists in residence within the holy place of the Most High. "*And from the noisome pestilence.*" He who is a Spirit can protect us from evil spirits, he who is mysterious can rescue us from mysterious dangers, he who is immortal can redeem us from mortal sickness. There is a deadly pestilence of error, we are safe from that if we dwell in communion with the God of truth ; there is a fatal pestilence of sin, we shall not be infected by it if we abide with the thrice Holy One ; there is also a pestilence of disease, and even from that calamity our faith shall win immunity if it be of that high order which abides in God, walks on in calm serenity, and ventures all things for duty's sake. Faith by cheering the heart keeps it free from the fear which, in times of pestilence, kills more than the plague itself. It will not in all cases ward off disease and death, but where the man is such as the first verse describes, it will assuredly render him immortal where others die ; if all the saints are not so sheltered it is because they have not all such a close abiding with God, and consequently not such confidence in the promise. Such special faith is not given to all, for there are diversities in the measure of faith. It is not of all believers that the Psalmist sings, but only of those who dwell in the secret place of the Most High. Too many among us are weak in faith, and in fact place more reliance in a phial or a globule than in the Lord and giver of life, and if we die of pestilence as others die it is because we acted like others, and did not in patience possess our souls. The great mercy is that in such a case our deaths are blessed, and it is well with us, for we are for ever with the Lord. Pestilence to the saints shall not be noisome but the messenger of heaven.

4. "*He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust.*" A wonderful expression ! Had it been invented by an uninspired man it would have verged upon blasphemy, for who should dare to apply such words to the Infinite Jehovah ? But as he himself authorised, yea, dictated the language, we have here a transcendent condescension, such as it becomes us to admire and adore. Doth the Lord speak of his feathers, as though he likened himself to a bird ? Who will not see herein a matchless love, a divine tenderness, which should both woo and win our confidence ? Even as a hen covereth her chickens so doth the Lord protect the souls which dwell in him ; let us cower down beneath him for comfort and for safety. Hawks in the sky and snares in the field are equally harmless when we nestle so near the Lord. "*His truth*"—his true promise, and his faithfulness to his promise "*shall be thy shield and buckler.*" Double armour has he who relies upon the Lord. He bears a shield and wears an all-surrounding coat of mail—such is the force of the word "*buckler.*" To quench fiery darts the truth is a most effectual shield, and to blunt all swords it is an equally effectual coat of mail. Let us go forth to battle thus harnessed for the war, and we shall be safe in the thickest of the fight. It has been so, and so shall it be till we reach the land of peace, and there among the "*helmed cherubim and sworded seraphim,*" we will wear no other ornament, his truth shall still be our shield and buckler.

5. "*Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night.*" Such frail creatures are we that both by night and by day we are in danger, and so sinful are we that in either season we may be readily carried away by fear ; the promise before us secures the favourite of heaven both from danger and from the fear of it. Night is the congenial hour of horrors, when alarms walk abroad like beasts of prey, or ghouls from among the tombs ; our fears turn the sweet season of repose into one of dread, and though angels are abroad and fill our chambers, we dream of demons and dire visitants from hell. Blessed is that communion with God which renders us im-

pervious to midnight frights, and horrors born of darkness. Not to be afraid is in itself an unspeakable blessing, since for every suffering which we endure from real injury we are tormented by a thousand griefs which arise from fear only. The shadow of the Almighty removes all gloom from the shadow of night : once covered by the divine wing, we care not what winged terrors may fly abroad in the earth. "*Nor for the arrow that flieth by day.*" Cunning foes lie in ambushcade, and aim the deadly shaft at our hearts, but we do not fear them, and have no cause to do so. That arrow is not made which can destroy the righteous, for the Lord hath said, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper." In times of great danger those who have made the Lord their refuge, and therefore have refused to use the carnal weapon, have been singularly preserved ; the annals of the Quakers bear good evidence to this ; yet probably the main thought is, that from the cowardly attacks of crafty malice those who walk by faith shall be protected, from cunning heresies they shall be preserved, and in sudden temptations they shall be secured from harm. Day has its perils as well as night, arrows more deadly than those poisoned by the Indian are flying noiselessly through the air, and we shall be their victims unless we find both shield and buckler in our God. O believer, dwell under the shadow of the Lord, and none of the archers shall destroy thee, they may shoot at thee and wound thee grievously, but thy bow shall abide in strength. When Satan's quiver shall be empty thou shalt remain uninjured by his craft and cruelty, yea, his broken darts shall be to thee as trophies of the truth and power of the Lord thy God.

6. "*Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness.*" It is shrouded in mystery as to its cause and cure, it marches on, unseen of men, slaying with hidden weapons, like an enemy stabbing in the dark, yet those who dwell in God are not afraid of it. Nothing is more alarming than the assassin's plot, for he may at any moment steal in upon a man, and lay him low at a stroke ; and such is the plague in the days of its power, none can promise themselves freedom from it for an hour in any place in the infected city ; it enters a house men know not how, and its very breath is mortal ; yet those choice souls who dwell in God shall live above fear in the most plague-stricken places—they shall not be afraid of the "*plagues which in the darkness walk.*" "*Nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.*" Famine may starve, or bloody war devour, earthquake may overturn and tempest may smite, but amid all, the man who has sought the mercy seat and is sheltered beneath the wings which overshadow it, shall abide in perfect peace. Days of horror and nights of terror are for other men, his days and nights are alike spent with God, and therefore pass away in sacred quiet. His peace is not a thing of times and seasons, it does not rise and set with the sun, nor does it depend upon the healthiness of the atmosphere or the security of the country. Upon the child of the Lord's own heart pestilence has no destroying power, and calamity no wasting influence : pestilence walks in darkness, but he dwells in light ; destruction wastes at noonday, but upon him another sun has risen whose beams bring restoration. Remember that the voice which saith "thou shalt not fear" is that of God himself, who hereby pledges his word for the safety of those who abide under his shadow, nay, not for their safety only, but for their serenity. So far shall they be from being injured that they shall not even be made to fear the ills which are around them, since the Lord protects them.

"He, his shadowy plumes outspread,
With his wing shall fence thy head :
And his truth around thee wield,
Strong as targe or bossy shield !
Naught shall strike thee with dismay,
Fear by night, nor shaft by day."

7. "*A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand.*" So terribly may the plague rage among men that the bills of mortality may become very heavy and continue to grow ten times heavier still, yet shall such as this Psalm speaks of survive the scythe of death. "*It shall not come nigh thee.*" It shall be so near as to be at thy side, and yet not nigh enough to touch thee ; like a fire it shall burn all around, yet shall not the smell of it pass upon thee. How true is this of the plague of moral evil, of heresy, and of backsliding. Whole nations are infected, yet the man who communes with God is not affected by the contagion ; he holds the truth when falsehood is all the fashion. Professors all around him are

plague-smitten, the church is wasted, the very life of religion decays, but in the same place and time, in fellowship with God, the believer renews his youth, and his soul knows no sickness. In a measure this also is true of physical evil; the Lord still puts a difference between Israel and Egypt in the day of his plagues. Sennacherib's army is blasted, but Jerusalem is in health.

"Our God his chosen people saves
Amongst the dead, amidst the graves."

8. "*Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.*" The sight shall reveal both the justice and the mercy of God; in them that perish the severity of God will be manifest, and in the believer's escape the richness of divine goodness will be apparent. Joshua and Caleb verified this promise. The Puritan preachers during the plague of London must have been much impressed with this verse as they came out of their hiding-places to proclaim mercy and judgment to the dissolute age which was so sorely visited with the pest. The sight of God's judgments softens the heart, excites a solemn awe, creates gratitude, and so stirs up the deepest kind of adoration. It is such a sight as none of us would wish to see, and yet if we did see it we might thus be lifted up to the very noblest style of manhood. Let us but watch providence, and we shall find ourselves living in a school where examples of the ultimate reward of sin are very plentiful. One case may not be judged alone lest we misjudge, but instances of divine visitation will be plentiful in the memory of any attentive observer of men and things; from all these put together we may fairly draw conclusions, and unless we shut our eyes to that which is self-evident, we shall soon perceive that there is after all a moral ruler over the sons of men, who sooner or later rewards the ungodly with due punishment.

9 Because thou hast made the LORD *which is* my refuge, *even* the most High, thy habitation;

10 There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

9, 10. Before expounding these verses I cannot refrain from recording a personal incident illustrating their power to soothe the heart, when they are applied by the Holy Spirit. In the year 1854, when I had scarcely been in London twelve months, the neighbourhood in which I laboured was visited by Asiatic cholera, and my congregation suffered from its inroads. Family after family summoned me to the bedside of the smitten, and almost every day I was called to visit the grave. I gave myself up with youthful ardour to the visitation of the sick, and was sent for from all corners of the district by persons of all ranks and religions. I became weary in body and sick at heart. My friends seemed falling one by one, and I felt or fancied that I was sickening like those around me. A little more work and weeping would have laid me low among the rest; I felt that my burden was heavier than I could bear, and I was ready to sink under it. As God would have it, I was returning mournfully home from a funeral, when my curiosity led me to read a paper which was wafered up in a shoemaker's window in the Dover Road. It did not look like a trade announcement, nor was it, for it bore in a good bold hand-writing these words:—"Because thou hast made the Lord, *which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.*" The effect upon my heart was immediate. Faith appropriated the passage as her own. I felt secure, refreshed, girt with immortality. I went on with my visitation of the dying in a calm and peaceful spirit; I felt no fear of evil, and I suffered no harm. The providence which moved the tradesman to place those verses in his window I gratefully acknowledge, and in the remembrance of its marvellous power I adore the Lord my God.

The Psalmist in these verses assures the man who dwells in God that he shall be secure. Though faith claims no merit of its own, yet the Lord rewards it wherever he sees it. He who *makes* God his refuge shall find him a refuge; he who dwells in God shall find his dwelling protected. We must *make* the Lord our habitation by choosing him for our trust and rest, and then we shall receive immunity from harm; no evil shall touch us personally, and no stroke of judgment shall assail our household. The *dwelling* here intended by the original was only a tent, yet the *frail* covering would prove to be a sufficient shelter from harm of all sorts. It matters

little whether our abode be a gipsy's hut or a monarch's palace if the soul has made the Most High its habitation. Get into God and you dwell in all good, and ill is banished far away. It is not because we are perfect or highly esteemed among men that we can hope for shelter in the day of evil, but because our refuge is the Eternal God, and our faith has learned to hide beneath his sheltering wing.

"For this no ill thy cause shall daunt,
No scourge thy tabernacle haunt."

It is impossible that any ill should happen to the man who is beloved of the Lord ; the most crushing calamities can only shorten his journey and hasten him to his reward. Ill to him is no ill, but only good in a mysterious form. Losses enrich him, sickness is his medicine, reproach is his honour, death is his gain. No evil in the strict sense of the word can happen to him, for everything is overruled for good. Happy is he who is in such a case. He is secure where others are in peril, he lives where others die.

11 For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

12 They shall bear thee up in *their* hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

13 Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder : the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

11. "*For he shall give his angels charge over thee.*" Not one guardian angel, as some fondly dream, but all the angels are here alluded to. They are the body-guard of the princes of the blood imperial of heaven, and they have received commission from their Lord and ours to watch carefully over all the interests of the faithful. When men have a charge they become doubly careful, and therefore the angels are represented as bidden by God himself to see to it that the elect are secured. It is down in the marching orders of the hosts of heaven that they take special note of the people who dwell in God. It is not to be wondered at that the servants are bidden to be careful of the comfort of their Master's guests ; and we may be quite sure that when they are specially charged by the Lord himself they will carefully discharge the duty imposed upon them. "*To keep thee in all thy ways.*" To be a body-guard, a garrison to the body, soul, and spirit of the saint. The limit of this protection "in all thy ways" is yet no limit to the heart which is right with God. It is not the way of the believer to go out of his way. He keeps in the way, and then the angels keep him. The protection here promised is exceeding broad as to place, for it refers to *all* our ways, and what do we wish for more ? How angels thus keep us we cannot tell. Whether they repel demons, counteract spiritual plots, or even ward off the subtler physical forces of disease, we do not know. Perhaps we shall one day stand amazed at the multiplied services which the unseen bands have rendered to us.

12. "*They,*" that is the angels, God's own angels, shall cheerfully become our servitors. "*They shall bear thee up in their hands*" ; as nurses carry little children, with careful love, so shall those glorious spirits upbear each individual believer. "*Lest thou dash thy foot against a stone*" ; even minor ills they ward off. It is most desirable that we should not stumble, but as the way is rough, it is most gracious on the Lord's part to send his servants to bear us up above the loose pebbles. If we cannot have the way smoothed it answers every purpose if we have angels to bear us up in their hands. Since the greatest ills may arise out of little accidents, it shews the wisdom of the Lord that from the smaller evils we are protected.

13. "*Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder.*" Over force and fraud shalt thou march victoriously ; bold opponents and treacherous adversaries shall alike be trodden down. When our shoes are iron and brass, lions and adders are easily enough crushed beneath our heel. "*The young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.*" The strongest foe in power, and the most mysterious in cunning, shall be conquered by the man of God. Not only from stones in the way, but from serpents also, shall we be safe. To men who dwell in God the most evil forces become harmless, they wear a charmed life, and defy the deadliest ills. Their feet come into contact with the worst of foes, even Satan himself nibbles at their heel, but in Christ Jesus they have the assured hope of bruising Satan under their feet shortly.

The people of God are the real "George and the dragon," the true lion-kings and serpent-tamers. Their dominion over the powers of darkness makes them cry, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy word."

14 Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him : I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.

15 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him : *I will be* with him in trouble ; I will deliver him, and honour him.

16 With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

14. Here we have the Lord himself speaking of his own chosen one. "*Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him.*" Not because he deserves to be thus kept, but because with all his imperfections he does love his God ; therefore not the angels of God only, but the God of angels himself will come to his rescue in all perilous times, and will effectually deliver him. When the heart is enamoured of the Lord, all taken up with him, and intensely attached to him, the Lord will recognise the sacred flame, and preserve the man who bears it in his bosom. It is love,—love set upon God, which is the distinguishing mark of those whom the Lord secures from ill. "*I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.*" The man has known the attributes of God so as to trust in him, and then by experience has arrived at a yet deeper knowledge, this shall be regarded by the Lord as a pledge of his grace, and he will set the owner of it above danger or fear, where he shall dwell in peace and joy. None abide in intimate fellowship with God unless they possess a warm affection towards God, and an intelligent trust in him ; these gifts of grace are precious in Jehovah's eyes, and wherever he sees them he smiles upon them. How elevated is the standing which the Lord gives to the believer. We ought to covet it right earnestly. If we climb on high it may be dangerous, but if God sets us there it is glorious.

15. "*He shall call upon me, and I will answer him.*" He will have need to pray, he will be led to pray aright, and the answer shall surely come. Saints are first called of God, and then they call upon God ; such calls as theirs always obtain answers. Not without prayer will the blessing come to the most favoured, but by means of prayer they shall receive all good things. "*I will be with him in trouble,*" or "*I am with him in trouble.*" Heirs of heaven are conscious of a special divine presence in times of severe trial. God is always near in sympathy and in power to help his tried ones. "*I will deliver him, and honour him.*" The man honours God, and God honours him. Believers are not delivered or preserved in a way which lowers them, and makes them feel themselves degraded ; far from it, the Lord's salvation bestows honour upon those it delivers. God first gives us conquering grace, and then rewards us for it.

16. "*With long life will I satisfy him.*" The man described in this Psalm fills out the measure of his days, and whether he dies young or old he is quite satisfied with life, and is content to leave it. He shall rise from life's banquet as a man who has had enough, and would not have more even if he could. "*And shew him my salvation.*" The full sight of divine grace shall be his closing vision. He shall look from Amana and Lebanon. Not with destruction before him black as night, but with salvation bright as noonday smiling upon him he shall enter into his rest.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—The Talmud writers ascribe not only the ninety-first Psalm, but the nine ensuing, to the pen of Moses ; but from a rule which will in no respect hold, that all the Psalms which are without the name of an author in their respective titles are the production of the poet whose name is given in the nearest preceding title. And though it is impossible to prove that this highly beautiful ode was not written by David, the general drift of its scenery and allusions rather concur in showing that, like the last, we are indebted for it to the muse of Moses : that it was composed by him during the journey through the wilderness, shortly after the plague of the fiery serpents ; when the children of Israel, having returned to a better spirit, were again received into the favour of JEHOVAH. Besides political enemies, the children of Israel in the wilderness had other evils in great numbers to encounter, from the nature and diseases of the climate, which exposed them to

coups de soleil, or *sun smitings*, during the heat of the day; and to pestilential vapours, *moon smitings*, during the damp of the night, so as to render the miraculous canopy of the cloud that hung over them in the former season, and the miraculous column of fire that cheered and purified them in the latter, equally needful and refreshing. In Egypt, they had seen so much of the plague, and they had been so fearfully threatened with it as a punishment for disobedience, that they could not but be in dread of its reappearance, from the incessant fatigues of their journeying. In addition to all which, they had to be perpetually on their guard against the insidious attacks of the savage monsters and reptiles of "that great and terrible wilderness," as Moses describes it on another occasion, "wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought; where there was no water" (Deut. viii. 15); and where, also, as we learn from other parts of Scripture, bears, lions, leopards or tigers, and "the wolf of the evening," as Jeremiah has beautifully expressed it, prowled without restraint. Now in the Psalm before us, and especially in the verses 6 to 13, we have so clear and graphic a description of the whole of these evils presented to us, as to bring its composition directly home to the circumstances and the period here pitched upon, and to render it at least needless to hunt out for any other occasion.—*J. M. Good's "Historical Outline of the Book of Psalms,"* 1842.

Whole Psalm.—It is one of the most excellent works of this kind which has ever appeared. It is impossible to imagine anything more solid, more beautiful, more profound, or more ornamented. Could the Latin or any modern language express thoroughly all the beauties and elegancies as well of the *words* as of the *sentences*, it would not be difficult to persuade the reader that we have no poem, either in *Greek* or *Latin*, comparable to this Hebrew ode.—*Simon de Muis.*

Whole Psalm.—Psalm XC. spoke of man withering away beneath God's anger against sin. Psalm XCI. tells of a Man, who is able to tread the lion and adder under his feet.—Undoubtedly the Tempter was right in referring this Psalm to "the Son of God" (Matthew iv. 6).

The imagery of the Psalm seems to be in part drawn from that Passover Night, when the Destroying Angel passed through Egypt; while the faithful and obedient Israelites were sheltered by God.—*William Kay.*

Verse 1.—"He," no matter who he may be, rich or poor, learned or unlearned, patrician or plebeian, young or old, for "God is no respecter of persons," but "he is rich to all that call upon him."—*Bellarmino.*

Verse 1.—"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High." Note, he who dwells in the secret place of the Most High is not he that conjures up one or two slight and fleeting acts of hope in him, but the man that places in him an assiduous and constant confidence. In this way he establishes for himself in God by that full trust, a home, a dwelling-place, a mansion, . . . The Hebrew for *he that dwelleth*, is *וָיָשׁ*, that is, dwelling in quietude, and resting, enduring and remaining with constancy.—*Le Blanc.*

Verse 1.—"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High." What intimate and unrestrained communion does this describe!—the Christian in everything making known his heart, with its needs and wishes, its thoughts and feelings, its doubts and anxieties, its sorrows and its joys, to God, as to a loving, perfect friend. And all is not on one side. This Almighty Friend has admitted his chosen one to his "secret place." It is almost too wonderful to be true. It is almost too presumptuous a thought for such creatures as we are to entertain. But he himself permits it, *desires* it, teaches us to realise that it is *communion* to which he calls us. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." And what is this "secret"? It is *that* in God which the world neither knows, nor sees, nor cares to enjoy. It is his mind revealed to those that love him, his plans, and ways ("He made known his ways to Moses," Ps. ciii. 7), and thoughts opened to them. Yea, and things hid from angels are manifest to the least of his friends, (1 Peter i. 12). He wishes us to know him, and by his Word and by his Spirit he puts himself before us. Ah! it is not his fault if we do not know him. It is our own carelessness.—*Mary B. M. Duncan, in "Under the Shadow,"* 1867.

Verse 1.—By "secret" here is meant a place of refuge from the storms of the world under the secret of his providence, who careth for all his children. Also, by the "secret of the most High," some writers understand the castle of his mighty defence, to which his people run, being pursued by enemies, as the wild creature doth to his hole or den for succour, when the hunter hath him in chase, and the dogs

are near. This then being the meaning of that which the prophet calleth the "*secret place of the most High*," and our dwelling in it, by confidence in him; we learn, in all troubles, to cleave to *God* chiefly or only for help, and to *means* but as underlings to his providence.

That which is here translated "*dwellesh*," is as much in weight as *sitteth*, or is settled; and so, our dwelling in God's secret, is as much as our sitting down in it; the meaning is, we must make it our rest, as if we should say, Here will we dwell. From whence we learn, that God's children should not come to God's *secret-place* as guests to an inn, but as inhabitants to their own dwellings; that is, they should continue to trust in God, as well in want as in fulness; and as much when they *wither* in their root, as when they *flourish* in it.—*Robert Horn*.

Verse 1.—"He that *dwellesh*," etc. 1. "He dwells," therefore he shall "abide." He shall lodge quietly, securely. 2. "He dwells in the secret place," therefore he shall "abide under the shadow." In the cool, the favour, the cover from the heat. 3. "He *dwellesh* in the secret place of the Most High, therefore he shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty;" *i.e.*, of the all-powerful God, of the God of heaven; of that God whose name is Shaddai, All-sufficient.—*Adam Clarke*.

Verse 1.—"Shall abide." The Hebrew for "*shall abide*" is שָׁבַת, which signifies *he shall pass the night*. Abiding denotes a constant and continuous dwelling of the just in the assistance and protection of God. That help and protection of God is not like a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, or in a vineyard; which is destroyed in a moment, nor is it like a tent in the way which is abandoned by the traveller. It is a strong tower, a paternal home, wherein we spend all our life with the best, wealthiest, and mightiest of parents. *Passing the night* also denotes security and rest in time of darkness, temptations and calamities. With God Abraham passed the night, when He foretold to him the affliction of his descendants in Egypt, and their deliverance, Gen. xv. 12 seq. Then also God said to him (verse 1), *Fear not Abram, I am thy shield*. And leading him forth he showed him the glittering stars, and said, Tell the number of the stars, if thou be able; so shall thy seed be.—*Le Blanc*.

Verse 1.—"The shadow." The allusion of this verse may be to the awful and mystic symbols of the ark. Under the ancient ceremony, the high priest only could enter, and that but once a year, into the holy place, where stood the emblems of the divine glory and presence; but under the present bright and merciful dispensation, every true believer has access, with boldness, into the holiest of all; and he who now *dwellesh* in the secret place of prayer and communion with the God of salvation, shall find the divine mercy and care spread over him for his daily protection and solace.—*John Morison*.

Verse 1.—"Under the shadow of the Almighty." This is an expression which implies great nearness. We must walk very close to a companion, if we would have his shadow fall on us. Can we imagine any expression more perfect in describing the constant presence of God with his chosen ones, than this—they shall "*abide under his shadow*"? In Solomon's beautiful allegory, the Church in a time of special communion with Christ, says of him—"I sat down under his shadow with great delight" (Cant. ii. 3)—"sat down," desiring not to leave it, but to abide there for ever. And it is he who chooses to dwell in the secret place of the most High, who shall "*abide under the shadow of the Almighty*." There is a condition and a promise attached to it. The condition is, that we "*dwell in the secret place*,"—the promise, that if we do so we "*shall abide under the shadow*." It is of importance to view it thus. For when we remember the blessing is a *promised* blessing—we are led to feel it is a gift—a thing therefore to be prayed for in faith, as well as sought for by God's appointed means. Ah, the hopes that *this* awakens! My wandering, wavering, unstable heart, that of itself cannot keep to one course two days together, is to seek its perseverance from God, and not in its own strength. He will hold it to him if it be but seeking for steadfastness. It is not we who cling to him. It is he who keeps near to us.—*Mary B. M. Duncan*.

Verses 1—4; 9.—O you that be in fear of any danger, leave all carnal shifts, and carking counsels, and projects, and dwell in the rock of God's power and providence, and be like the dove that nestles in the holes of the rock; by faith betake yourselves unto God, by faith dwell in that rock, and there nestle yourselves, make your nests of safety in the clefts of this rock. But how may we do this thing, and what is the way to do it? Do this,—Set thy faith on work to make God that unto thee which thy necessity requires, pitch and throw thyself upon his power and

providence, with a resolution of spirit to rest thyself upon it for safety, come what will come. See an excellent practice of this, Ps. xci. 1, "*He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty;*" that is, he shall be safe from all fears and dangers. Ay, that is true, you will say, who makes any doubt of it? But how shall a man come to dwell, and get into this secret place, within this strong tower? See verse 2: "*I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress;*" as if he had said, I will not only say, that he is a refuge; but he is my refuge, I will say to the Lord; that is, I will set my faith on work in particular, to throw, devolve, and pitch myself upon him for my safety. And see what follows upon this setting faith thus on work, verses 3, 4: "*Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers,*" etc. So confident the Psalmist is that upon this course taken, safety shall follow.

Our safety lies not simply upon this, because God is a refuge, and is an habitation, but "*Because thou hast made the Lord which is my refuge, thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee,*" etc. It is therefore the *making* of God our habitation, upon which our safety lies; and this is the way to make God an habitation, thus to pitch and cast ourselves by faith upon his power and providence.—*Jeremiah Dyke.*

Verse 1.—We read of a stag that roamed about in the greatest security, by reason of its having a label on its neck, "*Touch me not, I belong to Cæsar*": thus the true servants of God are always safe, even among lions, bears, serpents, fire, water, thunder, and tempests; for all creatures know and reverence the shadow of God.—*Bellarmino.*

Verse 2.—"*My refuge, my fortress, my God.*" "*My refuge.*" God is our "*refuge.*" He who avails himself of a refuge is one who is forced to fly. It is a quiet retreat from a pursuing enemy. And there are trials, and temptations, and enemies, from which the Christian does best to fly. He cannot resist them. They are too strong for him. His wisdom is to fly into the refuge of the secret place of his God—to rest in the shadow of the Almighty. His "*strength is to sit still*" there. Isai. xxx. 7. "*My fortress.*" The Psalmist says, moreover, that God is his "*fortress.*" Here the idea is changed—no longer a peaceful, quiet hiding-place, but a tower of defence—strong, manifest, ready to meet the attacks of all enemies, ready and able to resist them all. God is a Friend who meets every want in our nature, who can supply every need. So when we are weak and fainting, and unable to meet the brunt of battle, and striving against sin and sorrow and the wrath of man, he is our safe, quiet resting-place—our *fortress* also where no harm can reach us, no attack injure us. "*My God.*" Now the Psalmist, as a summing up of all his praises, says "*I will say of him, He is . . . my God!*" Is there anything omitted in the former part of his declaration? *Everything* is here—all possible ascription of honour, and glory, and power to him "*as God*"—"God over all, blessed for ever," and of love, reverence, trust, obedience, and filial relation towards him on the part of the Psalmist, as my God . . . when reflecting on the refuge and strength which the Lord has always been to him, and recalling his blessed experiences of sweet communion with God—words fail him. He can only say (but oh, with what expression!) My God!—*Mary B. M. Duncan.*

Verse 2.—"*My God.*" Specially art thou my God, first, on thy part, because of the special goodness and favour which thou dost bestow upon me. Secondly, on my part, because of the special love and reverence with which I cling to thee.—*J. Paulus Palanterius.*

Verses 2—4.—If the severity and justice of God terrify, the Lord offereth himself as a *bird with stretched out wings* to receive the supplicant, ver. 4. If enemies who are too strong do pursue, the Lord openeth his bosom as a *refuge*, ver. 2. If the child be assaulted, he becometh a *fortress*, ver. 2. If he be hotly pursued and enquired after, the Lord becometh a *secret place* to hide his child; if persecution be hot, God giveth himself for a *shadow*; if potentates and mighty rulers turn enemies, the Lord interposeth as the *Most High and Almighty Saviour*, ver. 1. If his adversaries be crafty like fowlers or hunters, the Lord promiseth to prevent and break the snares, ver. 3. Whether evils do come upon the believer night or day, secretly or openly, to destroy him, the Lord preserveth his child from *destruction*; and if stumbling-blocks be laid in his child's way, he hath his instruments, his servants, his angels, prepared to keep the believer that he stumble not: "*He shall give his angels charge over thee*"; not one angel only, but all of them, or a number of them.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 3.—"He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler." Are we therefore beasts? Beasts doubtless. When man was in honour he understood not, but was like the foolish beasts. [Ps. xlix.] Men are certainly beasts, wandering sheep, having no shepherd. Why art thou proud, O man? Why dost thou boast thyself O smatterer? See what a beast thou art, for whom the snares of the fowler are being prepared. But who are these fowlers? The fowlers indeed are the worst and wickedest, the cleverest and the cruellest. The fowlers are they who sound no horn, that they may not be heard, but shoot their arrows in secret places at the innocent. . . . But lo! since we know the fowlers and the beasts, our further enquiry must be, what this snare may be. I wish not myself to invent it, nor to deliver to you what is subject to doubt. The Apostle shows us this snare, for he was not ignorant of the devices of these fowlers. Tell us, I pray, blessed Paul, what this snare of the devil is, from which the faithful soul rejoices that it is delivered? *They that will be rich* [in this world?] says he, *fall into temptation and the snare* [of the devil?] (1 Tim. 6). Are not the riches of this world, then, the snare of the devil? Alas! how few we find who can boast of freedom from this snare, how many who grieve that they seem to themselves too little enmeshed in the net, and who still labour and toil with all their strength to involve and entangle themselves more and more. Ye who have left all and followed the Son of man who has not where to lay his head, rejoice and say, *He hath delivered me from the snare of the fowlers.*—Bernard.

Verse 3.—"Surely he shall deliver thee from the noisome pestilence." Lord Craven lived in London when that sad calamity, the plague, raged. His house was in that part of the town called Craven Buildings. On the plague growing epidemic, his Lordship, to avoid the danger, resolved to go to his seat in the country. His coach and six were accordingly at the door, his baggage put up, and all things in readiness for the journey. As he was walking through his hall with his hat on, his cane under his arm, and putting on his gloves, in order to step into his carriage, he overheard his negro, who served him as postillion, saying to another servant, "I suppose, by my Lord's quitting London to avoid the plague, that his God lives in the country, and not in town." The poor negro said this in the simplicity of his heart, as really believing a plurality of gods. The speech, however, struck Lord Craven very sensibly, and made him pause. "My God," thought he, "lives everywhere, and can preserve me in town as well as in the country. I will even stay where I am. The ignorance of that negro has just now preached to me a very useful sermon. Lord, pardon this unbelief, and that distrust of thy providence, which made me think of running from thy hand." He immediately ordered his horses to be taken from the coach, and the baggage to be taken in. He continued in London, was remarkably useful among his sick neighbours, and never caught the infection.—*Whitecross's Anecdotes.*

Verses 3, 6.—"Pestilence." It is from a word (רָצַח) that signifies to speak, and speak out; the pestilence is a speaking thing, it proclaims the wrath of God amongst a people. Drusius fetches it from the same root, but in *piel*, which is to decree; showing that the pestilence is a thing decreed in heaven, not casual. Kirker thinks it is called רָצַח, because it keeps order, and spares neither great nor small. The Hebrew root signifies to destroy, to cut off, and hence may the plague or pestilence have its name. The Septuagint renders it *θάνατος*, death, for ordinarily it is death; and it is expressed by "*Death.*" Rev. vi. 8, he sat on the pale horse, and killed with sword, hunger, death, and beasts of the earth; it refers to Ezek. xiv. 21, where the pestilence is mentioned. Pestilence may be from a word which signifies to spread, spoil, rush upon, for it doth so; 2 Sam. xxiv. 15, seventy thousand slain in three days; and plague, *α πλῆγη* from *πλησσω*, to smite, to wound, for it smites suddenly, and wounds mortally; hence it is in Numb. xiv. 12, "I will smite them with the pestilence." This judgment is very grievous, it is called in verse 3 the "noisome pestilence," because it is infectious, contagious; and therefore the French read it, "*de la peste dangereuse,*" from the dangerous pestilence, it doth endanger those that come near it; and Musculus hath it, *a peste omnium pessima*, from the worst pestilence of all: and others, the woful pestilence; it brings a multitude of woes with it to any place or person it comes unto, it is a messenger of woful fears, sorrows, distractions, terrors, and death itself.—*William Greenhill.*

Verse 4.—"He shall cover thee with his feathers," etc. Christ's wings are both for healing and for hiding (Mat. iv. 2), for curing and securing us; the devil and

his instruments would soon devour the servants of God, if he did not set an invincible guard about them, and cover them with the golden feathers of his protection.—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 4.—“*He shall cover thee with his feathers,*” etc. This is the promise of the present life. For the promise of the life to come, who can explain? If the expectation of the just be gladness, and such gladness, that no object of desire in the world is worthy to be compared with it, what will the thing itself be which is expected? No eye, apart from thee, O God, hath seen what thou hast prepared for them that love thee. Under these wings, therefore, four blessings are conferred upon us. For under these we are *concealed*; under these we are *protected* from the attack of the hawks and kites, which are the powers of the air: under these a salubrious shade *refreshes* us, and wards off the overpowering heat of the sun; under these also we are *nourished* and cherished.—*Bernard.*

Verse 4.—“*He shall cover thee with his feathers,*” etc.

His plumes shall make a downie bed,
Where thou shalt rest; He shall display
His wings of truth over thy head,
Which, like a shield, shall drive away
The feares of night, the darts of day.

Thomas Cary.

Verse 4.—“*His truth shall be thy shield and buckler.*” That which we must oppose to all perils is the truth, or Word of God; so long as we keep that, and ward off darts and swords by that means, we shall not be overcome.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 5.—The true remedy against tormenting fear is faith in God; for many terrible things may befall men when they are most secure, like unto those which befall men in the night: but for any harm which may befall the believer this way, the Lord here willeth him to be nothing afraid: “*Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night.*” Many sadder accidents may befall men when they are most watching and upon their guard, but the Lord willeth the believer to be confident that he shall not be harmed this way: “*Thou shalt not be afraid for the arrow that flieth by day.*” Many evils are men subject unto, which come upon them men cannot tell how, but from such evils the Lord assureth the believer he shall have no harm: “*Thou shalt not be afraid of the pestilence which walketh in darkness.*” Men are subject to many evils which come upon them openly, and not unawares, such as are calamities from enemies and oppressors; the Lord willeth the believer to be confident that he shall not be harmed this way: “*Thou shalt not be afraid for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.*”—*David Dickson.*

Verse 5.—“*Thou shalt not be afraid.*” Not only do the pious stand safe, they are not even touched with fear. For the prophet does not say, Thou shalt not be seized; but, Thou shalt not be afraid. Certainly such a confidence of mind could not be attributed to natural powers, in so menacing and so overwhelming a destruction. For it is natural to mortals, it is implanted in them by God the author and maker of nature, to fear whatever is hurtful and deadly, especially what visibly smites and suddenly destroys. Therefore does he beautifully join together these two things; the first, in saying, *Thou shalt not be afraid*; the second, by adding, *For the terror.* He acknowledges that this plague is terrible to nature; and then by his trust in divine protection he promises himself this security, that he shall not fear the evil, which would otherwise make human nature quail. Wherefore, in my judgment, those persons are neither kind (*humani*) nor pious who are of opinion that so great a calamity is not to be dreaded by mortals. They neither observe the condition of our nature, nor honour the blessing of divine protection; both of which we see here done by the prophet.—*Musculus.*

Verse 5.—Not that we are always actually delivered out of every particular danger or grievance, but because all will turn (such is our confidence in God) to our greater good; and the more we suffer the greater shall our reward and our glory be. To the same purpose is the expression of Isaiah: “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.” Isai. xliii. 2. So also Habakkuk iii. 17, 18, “Although the fig tree shall not blossom,” &c.; and Job v. 19, 20, etc. And therefore here is no ground, if the words be rightly understood, for any man absolutely

to presume or conclude that he shall actually be delivered out of any particular danger; much less upon such a presumption wilfully to run into dangers. If such figures, the ornament of all language; such rhetorical, emphatical amplifications be allowed to human writers, and well enough understood in ordinary language; why not to holy writers as well, who had to do with men, as well as others; whose end also was to use such expressions as might affect and move? That human writers have said as much of the security of good and godly men, I shall need to go no further than Horace his Ode, *Integer vitæ scelerisque purus*, &c. Most dangerous then and erroneous is the inference of some men, yea, of some expositors, here, upon these words of the Psalmist, that no godly man can suffer by the plague, or pestilence: nor is old Lactantius his assertion much sounder, *Non potest ergo fieri, quin hominem justum inter discrimina tempestatum*, &c., that no just man can perish by war, or by tempest. (Instit. 1, v., c. 18). Most interpreters conclude here, that the godly are preserved in time of public calamities; which, in a right sense, may be true; but withal they should have added, that all godly men are not exempted at such times; to prevent rash judgments.—*Westminster Assembly's Annotations*.

Verse 5.—“*The arrow.*” The arrow in this passage probably means the pestilence. The Arabs denote the pestilence by an allusion to this flying weapon. “I desired to remove to a less contagious air. I received from Solymán, the emperor, this message; that the emperor wondered what I meant, in desiring to remove my habitation; *is not the pestilence God's arrow, which will always hit his mark?* If God would visit me herewith, how could I avoid it? is not the plague, said he, in my own palace, and yet I do not think of removing.”—*Busbequius's Travels*. “What, say they, is not the plague the dart of Almighty God, and can we escape the blow that he levels at us? is not his hand steady to hit the persons he aims at? can we run out of his sight, and beyond his power?”—*Smith's Remarks on the Turks*, 1673. *Herbert* also speaking of Curroon, says, “That year his empire was so wounded with God's arrows of plague, pestilence, and famine, as this thousand years before was never so terrible.” See Ezekiel v. 16.—*S. Burder's Scripture Expositor*.

Verse 5, 6.—Joseph Scaliger explains, in *Epis. 9*, these two verses thus, *thou shalt not fear*, פָּחַדְךָ מִלַּיְלָה, *from consternation by night*, פָּחַדְךָ מִיּוֹם, *from the arrow flying by day*, פָּחַדְךָ מִלַּיּוֹם, *from pestilence walking at evening*, פָּחַדְךָ מִצֶּהָרָה, *from devastation at noon*. Under these four he comprehends all the evils and dangers to which man is liable. And as the Hebrews divide the four-and-twenty hours of day and night into four parts, namely, evening, midnight, morning, and mid-day, so he understands the hours of danger to be divided accordingly: in a word, “that the man who has made God his refuge,” is always safe, day and night, at every hour, from every danger.—*Bythner*.

Verse 6.—“*The pestilence that walketh in darkness; the destruction that wasteth at noonday.*” The description is equally forcible and correct. The diseases of all hot climates, and especially where vegetation is highly luxuriant, and marshes and miry swamps are abundant, as in the wilderness here referred to, proceed from the accumulating vapours of the *night*, or from the violence of the sun's rays at *mid-day*. The Beriberi of Ceylon, the spasmodic cholera and jungle-fever of India, and the greater part of the fevers of inter-tropical climates, especially that called the yellow fever, chiefly originate from the first of these—“the *pestilence* that stalketh in darkness”; while sun-strokes or coups de soleil, apoplexies, inflammations of the brain, and liver-complaints of most kinds, proceed from the second, “the *destruction* that wasteth at noonday.” And it is in allusion to this double source of mischief that the Psalmist exclaims most beautifully on another occasion, cxxi. 6: “The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.” And hence the Israelites were miraculously defended against both during their passage through the wilderness by the pillar of a cloud in the day-time, to ward off the solar rays; and by the pillar of fire by night, to dissipate the collecting vapours, and preserve the atmosphere clear, dry, and healthy.—*J. M. Good*.

Verse 6.—The putrid plague-fever often comes on in the night while the patient is asleep; the solstitial disease seizes in heat of harvest upon a man in open air, and cuts him off, perhaps ere evening. It is safety from perils like these that is spoken of. All these blessings are derived from and rest on (verse 1) the position of him that claims them “under the covert of the Most High.”—*Andrew A. Bonar*.

Verse 6.—“*The pestilence that walketh in darkness.*” It walketh not so much in natural darkness, or in the darkness of the night, as in a figurative darkness,

no man knowing where it walks, or whither it will walk, in the clearest light, whether to the poor man's house, or to the rich man's house, whether to the dwelling of the plebeian, or of the prince, till it hath left its own mark, and given a deadly stroke.—*Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 7.—“*Ten thousand.*” The word *myriad* would better represent the exact idea in the original, as the Hebrew word is different from that which is translated “a thousand.” It is here put for any large number.—*Albert Barnes*.

Verse 7.—“*It shall not come nigh thee.*” Not nigh thee? What? when they die on this side and on that side, on every hand of a man, doth it not come nigh him? Yes, nigh him, but not so nigh as to hurt him: *the power of God can bring us near to danger, and yet keep us far from harm.* As good may be locally near us, and yet virtually far from us, so may evil. The multitude thronged Christ in the Gospel, and yet but one touched him so as to receive good; so Christ can keep us in a throng of dangers, that not one shall touch us to our hurt.—*Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 7.—“*It shall not come nigh thee.*” Not with a view of showing that all good men may hope to escape from the pestilence, but as proofs that some who have had superior faith have done so, I have collected the following instances from various sources.—*C. H. S.*

Before his departure from Isna [Isny], the town was greatly afflicted with the pestilence; and he understanding that many of the wealthiest of the inhabitants intended to forsake the place, without having any respect or care of such as laboured with that disease, and that the houses of such as were infected, were commanded to be shut up by the magistrate, he openly admonished them, either to continue in the town, or liberally to bestow their alms before their departure, for the relief of such as were sick. And during the time of the visitation, he himself in person would visit those that were sick; he would administer spiritual comfort unto them, pray for them, and would be present with them day and night; and yet by the providence of God he remained untouched, and was preserved by the allpowerful hand of God.—*From the Life of Paulus Fagius, in T. Fuller's Abel Redevivus.*

In 1576, Cardinal Carlo Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan, the worthiest of all the successors of St. Ambrose, when he learnt at Lodi, that the plague had made its appearance in his city, went at once to the city. His council of clergy advised him to remain in some healthy part of his diocese till the sickness should have spent itself, but he replied that a bishop, whose duty it is to give his life for his sheep, could not rightly abandon them in time of peril. They owned that to stand by them was the higher course. “Well,” he said, “is it not a bishop's duty to choose the higher course?” So back into the town of deadly sickness he went, leading the people to repent, and watching over them in their suffering, visiting the hospitals, and, by his own example, encouraging his clergy in carrying spiritual consolation to the dying. All the time the plague lasted, which was four months, his exertions were fearless and unwearied, and what was remarkable was, that of his whole household only two died, and they were persons who had not been called to go about among the sick.—*From “A Book of Golden Deeds,” 1864.*

Although Defoe's history of the plague is a work of fiction, yet its statements are generally facts, and therefore we extract the following:—“The misery of the poor I had many occasions to be an eye-witness of, and sometimes also of the charitable assistance that some pious people daily gave to such, sending them relief and supplies both of food, physic, and other help, as they found they wanted. . . . Some pious ladies were transported with zeal in so good a work, and so confident in the protection of Providence in discharge of the great duty of charity, that they went about in person distributing alms to the poor, and even visiting poor families, though sick and infected, in their very houses, appointing nurses to attend those that wanted attending, and ordering apothecaries and surgeons . . . giving their blessing to the poor in substantial relief to them, as well as hearty prayers for them. I will not undertake to say, as some do, that none of those charitable people were suffered to fall under the calamity itself; but this I may say, that I never knew anyone of them that came to any ill, which I mention for the encouragement of others in case of the like distress; and, doubtless, if they that give to the poor lend to the Lord, and he will repay them, those that hazard their lives to give to the poor, and to comfort and assist the poor in such misery as this, may hope to be protected in the work.”—*Daniel Defoe's Journal of the Plague in London.*

Horne, in his notes on the Psalms, refers to the plague in Marseilles and the

devotion of its bishop. There is a full account of him in the *Percy Anecdotes* from which we cull the following:—"M. de Belsunce, Bishop of Marseilles, so distinguished himself for his humanity during the plague which raged in that city in 1720, that the Regent of France offered him the richer and more honourable See of Laon, in Picardy; but he refused it, saying, he should be unwilling to leave a flock that had been endeared to him by their sufferings. His pious and intrepid labours are commemorated in a picture in the Town Hall of Marseilles, in which he is represented in his episcopal habit, attended by his almoners, giving his benediction to the dying. . . . But perhaps the most touching picture extant of the bishop's humane labours, is to be found in a letter of his own, written to the Bishop of Soissons, Sept. 27, 1720. 'Never,' he says, 'was desolation greater, nor was ever anything like this. Here have been many cruel plagues, but none was ever more cruel: to be sick and dead was almost the same thing. What a melancholy spectacle have we on all sides! we go into the streets full of dead bodies, half rotten through, which we pass to come to a dying body, to excite him to an act of contrition, and give him absolution.' " Notwithstanding exposure to a pestilence so fatal, the devoted bishop escaped uninjured.

While France justly boasts of "Marseilles' good Bishop," England may congratulate herself on having cherished in her bosom a clergyman who in an equally earnest manner discharged his pastoral care, and watched over the simple flock committed to his charge, at no less risk of life, and with no less fervour of piety and benevolence. The Rev. W. Mompesson was rector of Eyam in Derbyshire, in the time of the plague that nearly depopulated the town in the year 1666. During the whole time of the calamity, he performed the functions of the physician, the legislator, and the minister of his afflicted parish; assisting the sick with his medicines, his advice, and his prayers. Tradition still shows a cavern near Eyam, where this worthy pastor used to preach to such of his parishioners as had not caught the distemper. Although the village was almost depopulated, his exertions prevented the spread of the plague to other districts, and he himself survived unharmed.

Verse 8.—"Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked." First, indeed, because of thy own escape; secondly, on account of thy complete security; thirdly, for the sake of comparison; fourthly, because of the perfect pre-eminence of justice itself. For then it will not be the time of mercy, but of judgment; nor shall any mercy in any way be ever shown towards the wicked there, where no improvement can be hoped for. Far away will be that softness of human infirmity, which meanwhile charity nevertheless uses for salvation, collecting in the ample folds of her outspread net good and bad fishes, that is, pleasant and hurtful affections. But this is done at sea. On the shore she chooses only the good, and so rejoicing with them that do rejoice, it hence comes to pass that she weeps not with those that weep.—*Bernard*.

Verse 9.—Here commences the second half of the Psalm. And it is as though the Psalmist feared lest (as is too often the case with us) we should, in dwelling on the promises and blessings of God, and applying them to ourselves, forget the condition to which they are annexed—the character of those who are to receive them. He therefore pauses here to remind us of the opening verses of the Psalm, by repeating again their substance.—*Mary B. M. Duncan*.

Verse 9.—"Because thou hast made the Lord," etc. What faith is this, what trust is that which God hath promised protection and deliverance to in the time of a plague? What act of faith is it? What faith is it? I answer *first*, there is a faith of persuasion, called faith, whereby men are persuaded and verily believe that they shall not die, nor fall by the hand of the plague. This is well; but I do not find in the 91st Psalm that this protection is entailed upon this persuasion, neither do I find this faith here mentioned.

There is also a faith of reliance, whereby a man doth rely upon God for salvation; this is a justifying faith, true justifying faith; this is true faith indeed: but I do not find in this Psalm, that this promise of protection and deliverance in the time of a plague is entailed upon this, nor that this is here mentioned.

But again, there is a faith, I may call it a faith of recourse unto God, whereby a man doth betake himself unto God for shelter, for protection as to his habitation: when other men do run one this way, another that way, to their hiding places: in the time of a plague for a man then to betake himself to God as to his habitation,

I think this is the faith here spoken of in this 91st Psalm : for do but mark the words of the Psalm : at the 1st verse, " He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High," in the hiding place of the Most High ; as if he should say, " When others run from the plague and pestilence and run to their hiding places," " He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High," that betakes himself to God as his hiding place and his habitation, he shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty, shall be protected ; and so at the 9th verse, " Because thou hast made the Lord which is my refuge, even the Most High thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling ;" as if he should say to us, In time of a plague men are running and looking out for habitations and hiding places ; but because thou hast made the Lord thy habitation, and hast recourse to him as thy habitation, " no evil shall befall thee, neither shall the plague come nigh thy dwelling ;" and again at the 11th verse it is said, " He shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways," the ways of thy calling ; as if he should say, In the time of a plague men will be very apt to leave station and calling, and so run away from the plague and pestilence ; but saith he, " He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways," the ways of thy calling and place ; that is, look when a man in the time of a plague shall conscientiously keep his station and place, and betake himself to God as his habitation ; this is the faith that is here spoken of, and this is the faith that God hath promised protection to, here in the 91st Psalm. . . . This promise of protection and deliverance is not made to a believer as a believer, but as acting and exercising faith ; for though a man be a believer, if he do not act and exercise his faith, this promise will not reach him, therefore if a believer die, not exercising faith and trusting in God, it is no disparagement to the promise.—*William Bridge*.

Verse 9.—No man can have two homes—two places of constant resort. And if the Lord be truly " our habitation," we can have no other refuge for our souls, no other resting-place for our hearts.—*Mary B. M. Duncan*.

Verses 9, 10.—There is a threefold preservation which the church and the members of it may look for from divine providence. One from, another in, and a third by, dangers. First, from dangers, according to the promise in one of the Psalms, " Because thou hast made the Lord who is my refuge, even the Most High thy habitation : there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling." Austin had appointed to go to a certain town to visit the Christians there, and to give them a sermon or more. The day and place were known to his enemies, who set armed men to lie in wait for him by the way which he was to pass, and kill him. As God would have it, the guide whom the people had sent with him to prevent his going out of the right way mistook, and led him into a by-path, yet brought him at last to his journey's end. Which when the people understood, as also the adversaries' disappointment, they adored the providence of God, and gave him thanks for that great deliverance.*

II. In dangers. So in Job v. 19, 20. " He shall deliver thee in six troubles, yea in seven there shall no evil touch thee. In famine he shall redeem thee from death ; and in war from the power of the sword." In time of famine the widow of Sarepta's store was made to hold out. The providence of God was with Daniel in the lion's den, shutting up the mouths of those furious beasts : and with the men in the fiery furnace, giving a prohibition to the fire that it should not burn, when they were in the jaws of danger, yea of death. The church hath always been a lily among thorns, yet flourishes still. This bush is yet far from a consumption, although it has seldom or never been out of the fire.

III. By danger. There is a preservation from greater evils by less. No poison but Providence knoweth how to make an antidote ; so Jonah was swallowed by a whale, and by that danger kept alive. Joseph thrown into a pit, and afterwards sold into Egypt, and by these hazards brought to be a nursing father to the church. Chrysostom excellently, *Fides in periculis secura est, in securitate periculatur.*† Faith is endangered by security, but secure in the midst of danger, as Esther's was when she said, " If I perish I perish." God preserveth us, not as we do fruits that are to last but for a year, in sugar ; but as flesh for a long voyage in salt : we must expect in this life much brine and pickle, because our heavenly Father preserveth us as those whom he resolveth to keep for ever, in and by dangers themselves. Paul's

* *Agnoscent omnes miram Dei providentiam, cui ut liberatori gratias merito egerunt. Possidonius in vita August, chap. xii.*

† *Homil. xxvi. operis imperf. in Matt.*

thorn in the flesh, which had much of danger and trouble in it, was given him on purpose to prevent pride, which was a great evil. "Lest I," said he, "should be exalted above measure through abundance of revelations, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure." Elsewhere having commemorated Alexander the coppersmith's withstanding and doing him much evil, yea Nero's opening his mouth as a lion against him, and the Lord's delivering of him thence, he concludeth as more than a conqueror. "And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom; to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen." 2 Tim. iv. 14, 15, 17, 18.—*John Arrowsmith, (1602—1659.)*

Verses 9—14.—Dependence on Christ is not the cause of his hiding us, but it is the qualification of the person that shall be hid.—*Ralph Robinson.*

Verse 10.—"There shall no evil befall thee," etc. It is a security in the very midst of evils. Not like the security of angels—safety in a world of safety, quiet in a calm; but it is quiet in a storm, safety amid desolation and the elements of destruction, deliverance where everything else is going to wreck.—*Charles Bradley, 1840.*

Verse 10.—God doth not say no afflictions shall befall us, but no *evil*.—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 10.—Sin which has kindled a fire in hell, is kindling fires on earth continually. And when they break out, every one is asking how they happened. Amos replies, "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" And when desolation is made by fire, Isaiah declares, The Lord hath "consumed us, because of our iniquities." Many years ago my house was oft threatened to be destroyed, but the Lord insured it, by giving me the 10th verse of the 91st Psalm; and the Lord's providence is the best insurance.—*John Berridge.*

Verse 11.—"He shall give his angels charge," etc. Charge; charge is a strict command, more than a bare command; as when you would have a servant do a business certainly and fully, you lay a charge upon him, I charge you that you do not neglect that business; you do not barely tell what he should do, prescribe him his work, but you charge him to do it. So says the Lord unto the angels: My servants or children, now they are in the plague and pestilence, O my angels, I charge you stir not from their houses, I charge you, stir not from such an one's bed-side; it is a charge, "He shall give his angels charge."

Further, he doth not only, and will not only charge his angel, but his angels; not one angel charged with the safety of his people, but many angels; for their better guard and security, "He shall give his angels charge." And again, "He will give his angels charge over thee to keep thee;" to keep thee; charge over thee and to keep thee; not only over the whole church of God, but over every particular member of the church of God; "He will give his angels charge over thee to keep thee;" this is his marvellous care. Well, but besides this, "He will give his angels charge to keep thee in all thy ways," not in some of thy ways, but in all thy ways. As God's providence is particular in regard of our persons, so it is universal in regard of our ways. "He will give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee," not in some but "in all thy ways."

But is this all? No; "They shall bear thee up in their hands," as every servant desires and loves to take up the young heir, or the young master into his arms, so the angels. It is a great matter that the Lord promiseth to pitch his tents. "And the angels of the Lord shall pitch their tents round about them that fear him;" but here is more; the angels shall not only pitch their tents, be their guard, but their nurses, to bear them up in their hands; but why? "That thou dash not thy foot against a stone." When children begin to go, they are very apt to fall and get many a knock; to stumble at every little stone. Now there are many stones of stumbling that are in our way, and we are very apt to fall and miscarry; but such is the goodness of God, the providence of God, the goodness of his providence, that as he hath provided his angels to be our guard, in opposition to all our foreign enemies, so he hath provided his angels to be our nurses, in opposition to all our weaknesses and infirmities, that we get no hurt, that we miscarry not in the least.

But what need God make use of angels to protect his people, he is able to do it alone; and is it not for God's dishonour to make use of them for the protection of his people? No, it is for the honour of God, for the more honourable the servants

are, the instruments are, that a king or prince doth use for the protecting of his people, the more honourable is that king or prince. Now the angels, they are honourable creatures; frequently they are called gods; "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels." . . . They are the fittest people in the world for this employment, fittest in regard of themselves, fittest in regard of the saints. They are fittest in regard of themselves, for *First*, they are an exceeding strong and potent people; who more fit to look to and care for the concernments of the saints and people of God, than those that are strong and potent? It is said of the angels in the ciii. Psalm, that they excel in strength. v. 20. . . . One angel you know destroyed a hundred and fourscore thousand of the host of Assyria in a night; as one constable will scare away twenty thieves, so one good angel invested with God's authority is able to drive away a thousand evil angels, devils: they are an exceeding strong and potent people. *Second*. As they are an exceeding strong and potent people, so they are a very knowing and a wise people; and who so fit to manage the affairs and concerns of the saints and people of God, and to protect and defend them, as a knowing and understanding people? You know what Joab said to David; "Thou art for wisdom as an angel of God." Says our Saviour, "No man knoweth that day and time, no, not the angels in heaven;" as if the angels in heaven knew every secret and were acquainted with every hidden thing: they are an exceeding knowing people, very prudent and very wise. *Third*. As they are an exceeding knowing and wise people, so they are also exceeding active and expeditious, quick in despatches. Who more fit to protect and defend the saints and people of God, than those that are active, expedite, and quick in their despatches? such are the angels. In the first of Ezekiel ye read that every one had four wings; why? because of their great activity and expedition, and the quick despatch they make in all their affairs. *Fourth*. As they are an active and expeditious people, so they are a people very faithful both to God and man; in the ciii. Psalm they are ready to do God's will, and not only ready to fulfil God's will, but they do it: "Bless the Lord all ye his angels that excel in strength (v. 20), that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts, ye ministers of his that do his pleasure." They are very faithful; and who so fit to do the work, to attend and look to the concernments of the saints and people of God, as those that are faithful? *Fifth*. As they are an exceeding faithful people, so they are a people that are very loving to the saints and children of God, very loving; otherwise they were not fit to be their nurses: what is a nurse without love? They are loving to the saints. "Do it not," (said the angel unto John), "I am thy fellow-servant;" do not give divine worship to me, I am thy fellow-servant; fellow-servants are loving to one another; they are fellow-servants with the saints. . . . It is recorded of Alexander that being in great danger and to fight next day with his enemies, he slept very soundly the night before; and he being asked the reason thereof, said, Parmenio wakes; meaning a great and faithful captain of his; Parmenio wakes, says he. The angels are called watchmen; they watch and are faithful, therefore you may be secure, quiet, and at rest: trust in the Lord for ever, upon this account, in this day trust in the Lord.

If these things be so, then, friends, why should we not stoop to any work commanded, though it lie much beneath us? Do not you think that the attending upon a sick man, a man that hath a plague sore running upon him, is a work that lies much beneath angels? yet the angels do it because it is commanded, though much beneath them yet they stoop to it because it is commanded: and what though a work lie much beneath you, yet if it be commanded, why should you not stoop to it? You will say, Such an one is much beneath me, I will not lay my hand under his shoes, he is much beneath me; ah, but the angels lay their hands under your shoes, and the work they do for you is much beneath them: why should we not be like our attendants? This is angelical obedience; the angels do you many a kindness, and never look for thanks from you, they do many a kindness that you are not aware of: why are you delivered sometimes you know not how? here is a hand under a wing, the ministration of angels is the cause of it. But I say the work they stoop to for you is much beneath them, and therefore why should we not stoop to any work commanded, though it lie much beneath us?—*William Bridge*.

Verse 11.—"He shall give his angels charge over thee," etc. When Satan tempted Christ in the wilderness, he alleged but one sentence of Scripture for himself, Matthew iv. 6, and that Psalm out of which he borrowed it made so plain against him, that he was fain to pick here a word and there a word, and leave out that which went

before, and skip in the midst, and omit that which came after, or else he had marred his cause. The Scripture is so holy, and pure, and true, that no word nor syllable thereof can make for the Devil, or for sinners, or for heretics: yet, as the Devil alleged Scripture, though it made not for him, but against him, so do the libertines, and epicures, and heretics, as though they had learned at his school.—*Henry Smith.*

Verse 11.—One angel armed with the power and glory of God is stronger than a whole country. Earthly princes are subject to many changes and great unsurety of life and estate. The reason is, their enemies may kill their watch, and corrupt their guard. But what men or kingdoms can touch the Church's watch? what angels of gold are able to corrupt the angels of God? and then how can that perish that is committed to keepers so mighty and faithful? Secondly, the charge of us is given to those ministering spirits by parcels, not in gross and piece-meal, not in a lump: our members in a book, our hairs by tale and number. For it is upon record, and, as it were, delivered to them in writing in one Psalm, *They keep all our bones*, Ps. xxxiv. 20; in this, *they keep our very foot*, putting it in security (ver. 12); and elsewhere our whole man and every member. And can a charge so precisely and so particularly given and taken, be neglected? Thirdly, their manner of keeping us, as it is set down in the text, cannot but promise great assurance; for, is not the little child safe while the nurse carrieth it in her arms, or beareth it in her hands? So while these nurses so bear us, can we be in danger? but our nurses on earth may fall; these nurses, the angels, cannot.—*Robert Horn.*

Verse 11.—“*His angels.*” Taking the word *angel* in its literal meaning, as *messenger*, we may look upon any agency which God employs to strengthen, protect, and help us, as *his angel* to us.—*Mary B. M. Duncan.*

Verse 11.—“*To keep thee in all thy ways.*” How should those heavenly spirits bear that man in their arms, like nurses, upon earth living; or bear up his soul to heaven, like winged porters, when he dies, that refuseth the right way? They shall keep us in all our ways. Out of the way it is their charge to oppose us, as to preserve us in the way. Nor is this more a terror to the ungodly, than to the righteous a comfort. For if an angel would keep even a Balaam from sinning, how much more careful are all those glorious powers to prevent the miscarriages of God's children! From how many falls and bruises have they saved us! In how many inclinations to evil have they turned us, either by removing occasions, or by casting in secretly good motions! We sin too often, and should catch many more falls, if those holy guardians did not uphold us. Satan is ready to divert us, when we endeavour to do well; when to do ill, angels are as ready to prevent us. We are in Joshua the high-priest's case, with Satan on the one hand, on the other an angel, Zech. iii. 1: without this, our danger were greater than our defence, and we could neither stand nor rise.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 11.—“*To keep thee in all thy ways.*” Their commission, large as it is, reaches no further: when you leave that, you lose your guard; but while you keep your way, angels, yea, the God of angels, will keep you. Do not so much fear losing your estate or your liberty or your lives, as losing your way, and leaving your way: fear that more than anything; nothing but sin exposeth you to misery. So long as you keep your way, you shall keep other things; or if you lose any of them, you shall get what is better: though you may be sufferers for Christ you shall not be losers by him.—*Samuel Slater* (—1704), in “*Morning Exercises.*”

Verse 11.—“*In all thy ways.*” Your ways are God's ways, your way is the way commanded by God. If you be out of God's ways, you are out of your own way: if you be in your way, the angels shall keep you, even in the time of a plague, and bear you up in their hands that you dash not your foot against a stone; but if you be out of your way, I will not insure your safety. When Balaam went upon the devil's errand an angel met him and scared his ass, and the ass ran his foot against the wall, dashed his foot against the wall. The promise is, “*Thou shalt not dash thy foot against a stone*”; but he was out of his way, and the angel met him and scared his ass, and his ass made him rush his leg against the wall. Jonah went out of his way when he ran away from God; God bade him go one way, and he went another. Well, what then? were the angels with him for his protection? the very sea would not be quiet till he was thrown overboard: instead of angels to protect him, he had a whale to devour him. I confess indeed, through the free grace and mercy of God, the belly of destruction was made a chamber of preservation to him, but he was out of his way; and instead of an angel to keep him that he dash not his foot, his whole body was thrown overboard. Says Solomon, “*As*

a bird from her nest, so is a man out of his place": so long as the bird is in her nest it is free from the hawk, it is free from the birding-piece, it is free from the nets and gins and snares as long as it is in its nest; but when the bird is off her nest then she is exposed to many dangers. So, so long as a man is in his way, in his place and in his way, he is well and under protection; but when a man is off his nest, out of his place and out of his way, then is he exposed to all dangers: but be but in your way and then you may assure yourselves of divine protection, and of the management thereof by the hands of angels. Oh who would not labour always to be in that way which God hath appointed him to be in? Why should we not always consider with ourselves and say, But am I in my way? Old Mr. Dod being upon the water and going out of one boat into another, slipped between them, and the first word he spake was this, "Am I in my way?" so we should always be saying, But am I in my way? am I in my way? I am now idling away my time, but am I in my way? Oh my soul, am I in my way? I am in my calling this day without prayer in the morning and reading the Scriptures; but am I in my way? Oh my soul, am I in my way? I am now in such frothy company where I get no good, but hurt; but am I in my way? Ever consider this, Am I in my way? You may expect the Lord's protection and the angels' attendance, if you be in your way, but not else.—*William Bridge*.

Verse 11.—We have the safeguard of the empire; not only the protection of the King, from which the wicked as outlaws are secluded; but also the keeping of angels, to whom he hath given a charge over us, to keep us in all his ways. So nearly we participate of his divine things, that we have his own guard royal to attend us.—*Thomas Adams*.

Verse 11.—"He shall give his angels charge over thee," etc.

And is there care in heaven, and is there love
 In heavenly spirits to these creatures base,
 That may compassion of their evils move?
 There is, else much more wretched were the race
 Of men than beasts. But oh, the exceeding grace
 Of highest God, that loves his creatures so,
 And all his works with mercy doth embrace,
 That blessed angels he sends to and fro,
 To serve us wicked men, to serve his wicked foe!

How oft do they their silver bowers leave,
 To come to succour us that succour want!
 How oft do they with golden pinions cleave
 The fitting skies, like flying pursuivant,
 Against foul fiends to aid us militant!
 They for us fight, they watch and duly ward,
 And their bright squadrons round about us plant;
 And all for love and nothing for reward.
 Oh, why should heavenly God to man have such regard!

—*Edmund Spenser, 1552—1599.*

Verses 11, 12.—It is observable that Scripture is the weapon that Satan doth desire to wield against Christ. In his other ways of dealing he was shy, and did but lay them in Christ's way, offering only the occasion, and leaving him to take them up; but in this he is more confident, and industriously pleads it as a thing which he could better stand to and more confidently avouch. The care of his subtlety herein, lay in the misrepresentation and abuse of it, as may be seen in these particulars: (1) In that he urged this promise to promote a sinful thing, contrary to the general end of all Scripture, which was therefore written 'that we sin not.' (2) But more especially in his clipping and mutilating of it. He industriously leaves out that part of it which doth limit and confine the promise of protection to lawful undertakings, such as this was not, and renders it as a general promise of absolute safety, be the action what it will. It is a citation from Ps. xci. 11, 12 which there runs thus, "*He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.*" These last words, "*in all thy ways,*" which doth direct to a true understanding of God's intention in that promise, he deceitfully leaves out, as if they were needless and unnecessary parts of the promise, when indeed they were on purpose put there by the Spirit of God, to give a description of those persons and actions, unto whom, in such cases, the accomplishment of the promise might be expected; for albeit.

the word in the original, which is translated "ways"—*דרכים*—doth signify any kind of way or action in the general, yet in this place it doth not; for then God were engaged to an absolute protection of men, not only when they unnecessarily thrust themselves into dangers, but in the most abominably sinful actions whatsoever, which would have been a direct contradiction to those many scriptures wherein God threatens to withdraw his hand and leave sinners to the danger of their iniquities; but it is evident that the sense of it is no more than this, 'God is with you, while you are with him.' We have a paraphrase of this text, to this purpose, in Prov. iii. 23, "Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble;" where the condition of this safety, pointed to in the word "then," which leads the promise, is expressly mentioned in the foregoing verses, "My son, let them"—that is, the precepts of wisdom—"not depart from thine eyes . . . Then"—not upon other terms—"shalt thou walk in thy way safely." The "ways" then in this promise cited by Satan, are the ways of duty, or the ways of our lawful callings. The fallacy of Satan in this dealing with Scripture is obvious, and Christ might have given this answer, as Bernard hath it, That God promiseth to keep him in his ways, but not in self-created dangers, for that was not his way, but his ruin; or if a way, it was Satan's way, but not his. (3) To these two, some add another abuse, in a subtle concealment of the following verse in Ps. xci.: "*Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder.*" This concerned Satan, whose cruelty and poisonous deceits were fitly represented by the lion and the adder, and there the promise is also explained to have a respect to Satan's temptations—that is—God would so manage his protection, that his children should not be led into a snare.—*Richard Gilpin.*

Verses 11, 12.—There is, to my mind, a very remarkable coincidence of expression between the verses of this Psalm, about the office of God's angels, and that passage in Isaiah where Christ's sympathy and presence receive the same charge attributed to them without interposition. In Isaiah lxiii. 9, we read, "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them." And again, "They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone," compared with, "And he bare them, and he carried them all the days of old." Christ in us, by sympathy with our nature—Christ in us, by the indwelling of his Spirit in each individual heart—thus he knows all our needs. Christ with us, in every step, all-powerful to make all work for good, and with love and pity watching over our interests—thus his presence saves us, and all things are made his messengers to us.—*Mary B. M. Duncan.*

Verse 12.—"*Angels . . . shall bear thee up . . . lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.*" Angels are introduced as bearing up the believer in their hands, not that he may be carried in safety over some vast ocean, not that he may be transported through hostile and menacing squadrons, not that, when exposed to some extraordinary danger, he may be conveyed to a place of refuge, but, as bearing him up in their arms, "*lest at any time he hurt his foot against a stone.*" . . . Angels, the top-most beings in creation, the radiant, the magnificent, the powerful—angels are represented as holding up a righteous man, lest some pebble in the path should make him trip, lest he hurt his foot against a stone.

Is there, after all, any want of keeping between the agency and the act, so that there is even the appearance of angels being unworthily employed, employed on what is beneath them, when engaged in bearing us up, lest at any time we hurt the foot against a stone? Nay, the hurting the foot against a stone has often laid the foundation of fatal bodily disease: the injury which seemed too trifling to be worth notice has produced extreme sickness, and ended in death. Is it different in spiritual respects, in regard of the soul, to which the promise in our text must be specially applied? Not a jot. Or, if there be a difference, it is only that the peril to the soul from a slight injury is far greater than that to the body: the worst spiritual diseases might commonly be traced to inconsiderable beginnings. . . .

It can be no easy thing, this keeping the foot from being hurt against a stone, seeing that the highest of created beings are commissioned to effect it. Neither is it. The difficulty in religion is the taking up the cross "daily," rather than the taking it up on some set occasion, and under extraordinary circumstances. The serving God in little things, the carrying religious principle into the details of life, the discipline of our tempers, the regulation of our speech, the domestic Christianity, the momentary sacrifices, the secret and unobserved self-denials; who that knows anything of the difficulties of piety, does not know that there is greater danger of

his failing in these than in trials of apparently far higher cost, and harder endurance ; if on no other account, yet because the very absence of what looks important, or arduous, is likely to throw him off his guard, make him careless or confident, and thereby almost insure defect or defeat?—*Henry Melvill.*

Verse 12.—To carry them in their hands is a metaphor, and signifies a perfect execution of their custody, to have a special care of them, and therefore is rather expressed so, than carrying them on their shoulders. That which one carries on their hand they are sure to keep. The Spaniards have a proverb when they would signify eminent favour and friendship, ‘they carry him upon the palms of their hands,’ that is, they exceedingly love him, and diligently keep him. “*Lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.*” He persists in the metaphor : children often stumble and fall, unless they be led and carried in hands and arms. By *stones* are meant all difficulties, objections, perils, both to the outward and inward man, as Christ is said to take care of hairs and sparrows, that is, of every thing even to a hair. Now we know what this charge is, saving that Zanchy adds also the metaphor of school-masters, and says that we are poor rustic people, strangers ; but being adopted into the household of God, he gives his most noble ministers, the *angels*, charge, first of our nursing, and then of our education ; when we are weaned, to instruct us, to admonish, to institute, to correct us, to comfort us, to defend us, to preserve us from all evil, and to provoke us to all good. And these angels, seeing we are so dear to God, that for our sakes he spared not his own Son, take this charge with all their hearts upon them, and omit nothing of their duty from our birth to the end of our life.—*Henry Lawrence*, in “*A Treatise of our Communion and Warre with Angells*, 1646.

Verse 13.—“*Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder, the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.*” What avails a human foot among these ? What force of human affection can stand fast among such terrible monsters ? These are spiritual wickednesses, and are designated by not incongruous titles. . . . One is an *asp*, another a basilisk, a third a *lion*, and a fourth a *dragon*, because each in his own invisible way variously wounds,—one by his bite, another by his look, a third by his roar or blow, and a fourth by his breath.

Consider this also, whether perchance we are able to meet these four temptations with four virtues. The lion roars, who will not fear ? If any there be, he shall be *brave*. But when the lion is foiled, the dragon lurks in the sand, in order to excite the soul with his poisonous breath ; breathing therein the lust of earthly things. Who, think you, shall escape his wiles ? None but the *prudent*. But perhaps whilst you are careful in attacking these, some annoyance vexes you ; and lo ! the asp is upon you forthwith. For he seems to have found for himself a reasonable moment. Who is he that shall not be exasperated by this asp ? Certainly the man of *temperance* and modesty, who knows how to abound, and to suffer want. On this opportunity, I think, the Evil Eye with its wicked allurements may determine to fascinate thee. Who shall turn away his face ? Truly the *just* man, who not only desires not to take to himself the glory due to God, but not even to receive what is presented by another : if yet he is a just man, that justly executes what is just, who performs not his righteousness before men, who, lastly, although he is just, lifts not up his head. For this virtue consists specially in humility. This purifies the intention, this also obtains merit all the more truly and effectually, because it arrogates less to itself.—*Bernard.*

Verse 13.—“*Adder.*” The *pethen* is classed with the lion as being equally to be dreaded by the traveller. . . . There is no doubt that the Egyptian cobra is the *pethen* of Scripture.—*J. G. Wood.*

Verse 13.—“*Dragon.*” The expression is used (1) for “sea-monsters,” (2) for serpents, (3) for wild beasts or birds characteristic of desolate places, and (4) it is used figuratively to represent the enemies of the Lord, and especially Pharaoh, as head and representative of the Egyptian power, and Nebuchadnezzar, the head and representative of the Chaldean monarchy. The term is thus a general one, signifying any monstrous creature, whether of the land or of the water, and is to be set down with the one or the other, according as the context indicates.—*John Duns*, in “*Biblical Natural Science.*”

Verse 13.—“*Thou shalt tread upon ;*” “*thou shalt trample under feet.*” Thou shalt tread upon them, not accidentally, as a man treads upon an adder or a serpent in the way ; but his meaning is, thou shalt intentionally tread upon them like a

conqueror, thou shalt tread upon them to testify the dominion over them, so when the Lord Jesus gave that promise (Luke x. 19) to his disciples, that they should do great things, he saith, *You shall tread upon serpents*; that is, you shall have power to overcome whatsoever may annoy you: serpentine power is all hurtful power, whether literal or mystical. As the Apostle assures all believers (Rom. xvi. 20), "*God shall tread down Satan* (that old serpent) *under your feet shortly.*"—Joseph Caryl.

Verse 13 (second clause).—But what is said unto Christ? "*And thou shalt tread on the lion and dragon.*" *Lion*, for overt wrath; *dragon* for covert lurking.—Augustine.

Verse 14.—"*Because he hath set his love upon me.*" Vulg. "*Because he hath hoped in me.*" Whatever is to be done, whatever is to be declined, whatever is to be endured, whatever is to be chosen, thou O Lord art my hope. This is the only cause of all my promises, this the sole reason of my expectation. Let another pretend to merit, let him boast that he bears the burden and heat of the day, let him say that he fasts twice on the Sabbath, let him finally glory that he is not as other men; for me it is good to cleave unto God, to place my hope in the Lord God. Let others hope in other things, one in his knowledge of letters, another in his worldly-wisdom, one in his nobility, one in his dignity, another in some other vanity, for thy sake I have made all things loss, and count them but dung; since thou, Lord, art my hope.—Bernard, quoted by *Le Blanc*.

Verse 14 (first clause).—As there is a *because* and a *therefore* in the process of the law, in concluding death for sin, so there is a *because* and a *therefore* in the process of grace, and of the *gospel*, which doth reason from one grace given to infer another grace to be given, even grace for grace; and such is this here: "*Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him.*"—David Dickson.

Verse 14.—He does not say, *Because* he is without sin, because he has perfectly kept all my precepts, because he has merit and is worthy to be delivered and guarded. But he produces those qualities which are even found in the weak, the imperfect, and those still exposed to sin in the flesh, namely, adhesion, knowledge of his name, and prayer.—Musculus.

Verse 14.—"*He hath set his love upon me.*" In the love of a divinely illuminated believer there is (1) the sweet property of *gratitude*. The soul has just and enlarged views of the salvation which he has obtained through the name of Jesus. The evils from which he is saved; the blessings in hand, and the blessings in hope; the salvation in time, and the salvation through eternity, which can and shall be enjoyed through the name of Jesus, excites feelings of the most ardent gratitude in the soul of the Christian. (2) Another delightful ingredient in this settled love is, *admiration*. Everything in the scheme and execution of God's redeeming plan is an object of admiration. All that the Lord Jesus is in himself; all that he has done; all that he does at the present; and all that he has promised to do for his people, deserves the warmest admiration. This holy feeling is experienced in the breast of the man to whom the Lord can say, "*He hath set his love upon me.*" (3) Another ingredient in the illuminated love of the believer is *delightful complacency*. Nothing can afford complacent delight in any excellency unless we are persuaded that we either do possess, or may possess it. I may go to the palace of the greatest monarch in the world, and be deeply struck with astonishment and admiration at the wonder beheld, but there will not be one thrill of complacency felt in my bosom at the view of the astonishing objects which crowd upon my vision. Why? Because I neither have, nor can have any interest in them; they are not mine, nor ever can be; therefore, I cannot take complacent delight in them. But the love of the Christian is a delightful love, (as Mr. Baxter called it,) because there is in the Lord everything that is worthy of infinite and eternal admiration; and then there is the thought which produces a thrill of pleasure,—whatever I admire I can, in some measure, possess. The illuminated eye of God's favourite sees everything in the Lord to supply his necessities; everything to satisfy his desires, all his own; which makes the soul delight itself in the Lord, and he rests in his love. Therefore, the Lord says of the object of his lovingkindness, "*He hath set his love upon me*"—he hath renounced sin as the greatest abomination; he hath taken off the heart from all idolatrous attachment to the creature, and placed it fixedly and supremely upon God.—William Dawson, *Methodist Preacher* (1773—1841).

Verse 14.—"*He hath set his love upon me.*" We have a similar expression in

daily use, which means the bending of all our energies to one end—a ceaseless effort after one object. We say, “I have set my heart on such a thing.” This is what God will have from us—an intense, single-hearted love. We must love him “with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength, and with all our mind,” so that, like Jesus, we may “delight to do his will.” Just let us think of the way in which setting our heart on anything affects us, head, hands, time, thought, action—all are at work for its attainment. How we sacrifice everything else to it! Comfort, ease, present advantage, money, health, nay, our very selves, go freely for the sake of our cherished wish.

Have I so “set my heart upon” God? Temperaments differ. This may be an overdrawn picture of the way in which some of us seek a cherished object. But each knows his own capability in this way. God also knows our frame, and requires his best at every man’s hand.

There is one thing in this verse which may encourage us very much. It is not because of *perfect* love that God will deliver. It is to the will to love and serve—it is to the *setting* the heart, that the promise is made—to the “full purpose of heart” that is *set* to cleave unto the Lord.—*Mary B. M. Duncan.*

Verse 14.—“*I will set him on high.*” That is, in an inaccessible, or lofty place, I will set him, which means, I will deliver him. When men truly know God to be a deliverer, they both put confidence in him, and call upon him. Then God exalts and delivers him that calls.—*Franciscus Vatablus.*

Verse 14.—“*I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.*” There is a great deal of safety in the knowledge of God, in his attributes, and in his Christ. A man’s safety we see lies in his running to the tower (Prov. xxiii. 10); he runs and is safe. And it is the knowledge of this tower that sets a man a running to it. Hence we find safety attributed to the knowledge of the Lord. “*I will set him on high,*” I will exalt him, and so he shall be safe. Why so? “*Because he hath known my name*”; for the knowing of God aright was that which made him run, and so he is exalted and set on high. Then a man is safe when he hath got this tower to be his tower, when he hath gotten God to be his God. Now when we know God, we get him to be our God, and make this tower our tower, Jer. xxiv. 7: “I will give them an heart to know me, and I will be their God.”—*Jeremiah Dyke, in “The Righteous Man’s Tower,” 1639.*

Verses 14—16.—“*He hath known my name.*” From this text I would introduce to your notice the most desirable character under the sun; and I would exhibit him before you to excite each one to seek, until you obtain the same blessedness. The character that I shall exhibit is God’s FAVOURITE, one who is an object of the “loving-kindness of the Lord”; and in reading this passage there are two things which strike our attention concerning such a character. *First*, what the Lord says of him. *Second*, what the Lord says to him.

Now, then, my brethren—LOOK! There stands before you GOD’S FAVOURITE!

I. Listen to *what God says of him*. 1. He says of him, “*He knows my name.*” The first principle of the life of God in the fallen soul of man is knowledge; spiritual, divine knowledge. The first operation of the Holy Ghost in the work of salvation, is a conviction of the character and perfections and relations of God. The Lord says, “he knows my name.” He knows my name as Omniscient, Omnipresent, Holy, Just and True. (1) He first knows my name as a sin-hating, sin-avenging God; and this knowledge was a means of leading him to a deep sense of his own personal corruption, guilt, and danger as a sinner. (2) But the favourite of the Lord knows his name as revealed to Moses, as “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin.” He knows the name of the Lord as concentrated in the name of Jesus, who “shall save his people from their sins.” By the *white* beams of God’s holiness, (if I may so speak), the sinner sees his corruption, guilt and deformity: by the *red* beams of God’s justice he sees his unspeakable danger: by the *mild* beams of God’s mercy, he discovers a ground of hope—that there is pardon for his aggravated crimes. But it is in the face of our Lord Jesus Christ, that God appears most delightful. Hence we can say to every saved soul, as Paul did to the Corinthians:—“God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” As all the colours of the rainbow meet in one sunbeam, so all the perfections of God as perfectly unite, and more beautifully shine

forth, in the person and offices of Jesus Christ, upon the soul of the penitent believer. This saving knowledge is always vital, active, and powerful.—*William Dawson.*

Verse 14.—“*He hath known my name.*” May we not get some light on this expression from the custom of the Jews, keeping the name *JEHOVAH* sacred to their own use, regarding it as too holy even to be pronounced by them in common use, and thus preserving it from being taken in vain by the heathen around? Thus it was known to Jews only. . . . But whatever be the origin of the expressions, to “*know his name,*” to “*trust in his name,*” to “*believe in his name,*” it evidently in all these cases means whatever is revealed concerning him—all that by which he maketh himself known. His Word, his Providence, above all, his Son, are included thus in his *name*, which we must know, believe in, and trust. So that to “*know his name*” is to know himself, as revealed in the Gospel.—*Mary B. M. Duncan.*

Verse 14 (last clause).—Sound love to God, floweth from and is joined with sound knowledge of God, as his Majesty is declared unto us in Scripture: the believer who hath set his love upon God, “*hath known my name,*” saith he.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 15.—“*I will answer him.*” I think we sometimes discourage ourselves by a misconception of the exact meaning of the expression, “*answer,*” taking it to mean only *grant*. Now, an answer is not necessarily an acquiescence. It may be a refusal, an explanation, a promise, a conditional grant. It is, in fact, simply *attention to our request expressed*. In this sense, before we call he will answer, and while we are yet speaking he will hear, *Isaiah lxxv. 24.*—*Mary B. M. Duncan.*

Verse 15.—“*I will be with him in trouble.*” *I will be with him in trouble*, says God: and shall I seek meanwhile anything else than trouble? It is good for me to cleave unto God. Not only so, but also to put my hope in the Lord: because *I will deliver him*, he says, and honour him. *I will be with him in trouble. My delights*, he says, *are with the sons of men.* Emanuel God with us. *Hail*, thou art highly favoured, says the Angel to Mary, *the Lord is with thee*. In the fulness of grace he is with us, in the plenitude of glory we shall be with him. He descends in order to be near to those who are of a troubled heart, that he may be with us in our trouble. It is better for me, O Lord, to be troubled, whilst only thou art with me, than to reign without thee, to feast without thee, to be honoured without thee. It is good rather to be embraced by thee in trouble, to have thee in this furnace with me, than to be without thee even in heaven. For what have I in heaven, and without thee what do I desire upon earth? The furnace tries the gold, and the temptation of trouble just men.—*Bernard.*

Verse 15.—“*I will be with him in trouble.*” God hath made promises of his special presence with his saints in suffering. If we have such a friend to visit us in prison, we shall do well enough; though we change our place, we shall not change our keeper. “*I will be with him.*” God will hold our head and heart when we are fainting! What if we have more afflictions than others, if we have more of God’s company? God’s honour is dear to him; it would not be for his honour to bring his children into sufferings, and leave them there; he will be with them to animate and support them; yea, when new troubles arise. *Job v. 19.* “*He shall deliver thee in six troubles.*”—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 15.—“*I will be with him in trouble.*” Again God speaks and acts like a tender-hearted mother towards a sickly child. When the child is in perfect health she can leave it in the hands of the nurse; but when it is sick she will attend it herself; she will say to the nurse, “*You may attend a while to some other business, I will watch over the child myself.*” She hears the slightest moan; she flies to the cradle; she takes it in her arms; she kisses its lips, and drops a tear upon its face, and asks, “*What can I do for thee, my child? How can I relieve thy pain and soften thy sufferings? Don’t weep and break my heart; it is thy mother’s arms that are around thee; it is thy mother’s lap on which thou art laid; it is thy mother’s voice that speaks to thee; it is thy mother that is with thee; fear not.*” So the Lord speaks to his afflicted children. “*I will be with him in trouble.*” No mother can equally sympathise with her suffering child; as the Lord does with his suffering people. No! could all the love that ever dwelt in all the mothers’ hearts that ever existed, be united in one mother’s heart, and fixed on her only child, it would no more bear a comparison with the love of God to his people than the summer midnight glow-worm is to be compared to the summer mid-day sun.

Oh, that delightful sentence! “*I will be with him in trouble.*” At other times God will leave them in the hands of angels; “*I will give them charge over them, to*

keep them in all their ways ; they bear them up lest at any time they dash their feet against a stone." But when they are in trouble, I will say to the angels, " Stand aside, I will take care of them myself." " I will be with them in trouble." So he speaks to his people : " When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee ; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee : when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned ; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour." When languishing in sickness, he will make his bed, and his pillow ; when travelling through the valley of the shadow of death, the Lord will be with him, and enable him to sing, " I will fear no evil : for thou art with me ; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Thus he is with them as their physician and nurse, in pain and sickness ; as their strength in weakness ; as their guide in difficulty ; their ease in pain ; and as their life in death. " *I will be with him in trouble.*"—*William Dawson.*

Verse 16.—" *With long life will I satisfy him.*" Saint Bernard interprets this of heaven ; because he thought nothing long that had an end. This, indeed, is the emphasis of heaven's joy ; those blessed souls never sin, never weep more ; they shall not only be with the Lord, but ever with the Lord. This is the accent which is set on the eulogies given to heaven in Scripture. 'Tis " an inheritance," and that an " incorruptible one, that fadeth not away ;" it is " a crown of glory," and that a weighty one, yea, " an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory." When once it is on the saint's head it can never fall, or be snatched off ; it is a feast, but such a one that hath a sitting down to it but no rising up from it.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 16.—" *With long life will I satisfy him.*" Observe the joyful contrast here to the mournful words in the foregoing Psalm. " We spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten," (xc. 9, 10.) The life of Israel in the wilderness was shortened by Disobedience. The Obedience of Christ in the wilderness has won for us a blessed immortality.—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 16.—" *With long life will I satisfy him.*" etc. The margin here is " length of days ;" that is, days lengthened out or multiplied. The meaning is, I will give him length of days as he desires, or until he is satisfied with life ;—implying (1) that it is natural to desire long life ; (2) that long life is to be regarded as a blessing (comp. Prov. iii. 2, 16 ; Ex. xx. 12) ; (3) that the tendency of religion is to lengthen out life ; since virtue, temperance, regular industry, calmness of mind, moderation in all things, freedom from excesses in eating and drinking,—to all of which religion prompts,—contribute to health and to length of days ; and (4) that a time will come, even under this promised blessing of length of days, when a man will be " satisfied" with living ; when he will have no strong desire to live longer ; when, under the infirmities of advanced years, and under his lonely feelings from the fact that his early friends have fallen, and under the influence of a bright hope of heaven, he will feel that he has had enough of life here, and that it is better to depart to another world. " *And shew him my salvation.*" In another life, after he shall be satisfied with this life.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 16.—" *With long life will I satisfy him.*" This promise concerning length of life contains a gift of God by no means to be despised. Many enemies indeed will plot against his life, and desire to extinguish him as suddenly and as quickly as possible ; but I shall so guard him that he shall live to a good old age and be filled with years, and desire to depart from life.—*J. B. Folengius.*

Verse 16.—" *With long life will I satisfy him.*"

We live in deeds, not years ; in thoughts, not breaths ;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.
We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.

Philip James Bailey, in " Festus."

Verse 16.—" *Long life.*"

They err who measure life by years,
With false or thoughtless tongue ;
Some hearts grow old before their time ;
Others are always young.

'Tis not the number of the lines
On life's fast filling page,
'Tis not the pulse's added throbs,
Which constitute their age.

Some souls are serfs among the free
 While others nobly thrive ;
 They stand just where their fathers stood
 Dead, even while they live.

Others, all spirit, heart, and sense,
 Theirs the mysterious power,
 To live in thrills of joy or woe,
 A twelvemonth in an hour !

Bryan W. Procter.

Verse 16.—“ *Long life.*”

He liveth long who liveth well !
 All other life is short and vain :
 He liveth longest who can tell
 Of living most for heavenly gain

He liveth long who liveth well !
 All else is being flung away ;
 He liveth longest who can tell
 Of true things truly done each day.

Horatius Bonar.

Verse 16.—“ *I will shew him my salvation.*” The last, greatest, climax of blessing, including and concluding all ! What God does is perfectly done. Hitherto has his servant caught glimpses of the “ great salvation.” The Spirit has revealed step by step of it, as he was able to bear it. The Word has taught him, and he has rejoiced in his light. But all was seen *in part* and known *in part*. But when God has satisfied his servant with length of days, and time for him is over, eternity begun, he will “ *shew him his salvation.*” All will be plain. All will be known. God will be revealed in his love and his glory. And we shall know all things, even as we are known !—*Mary B. M. Duncan.*

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 1.—I. The secret dwelling-place. There is the dweller in the dark world, in the favoured land, in the holy city, in the outer court ; but the holy of holies is the “ secret place ”—communion, acceptance, etc. II. The protecting shadow—security, peace, etc. ; like hamlets of olden time clustered beneath castle walls.—*Charles A. Davis.*

Verse 1.—I. *The person.* One who is in intimate, personal, secret, abiding communion with God, dwelling near the mercy-seat, within the veil. II. The Privilege. He is the guest of God, protected, refreshed, and comforted by him, and that to all eternity.

Verses 1, 2.—Four names of God. I. We commune with him reverently, for he is the Most High. II. We rest in him as the Almighty. III. We rejoice in him as Jehovah or Lord. IV. We trust him as EL, the mighty God.

Verse 2.—I. Observe the nouns applied to God—refuge from trouble, fortress in trouble, God at all times. II. Observe the pronouns applied by man—“ *I* ” will say, “ *my* refuge, *my* fortress,” etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 2.—The power, excellence, fruit, reasonableness, and open avowal of personal faith.

Verse 3.—Invisible protection from invisible dangers ; wisdom to meet cunning, love to war with cruelty, omnipresence to match mystery, life to baffle death.

Verse 3.—SURELY, or reasons for assured confidence in God’s protection.

Verses 3—7.—Pestilence, panic, and peace ; (for times of widespread disease).—*Charles A. Davis.*

Verses 3, 8, 9.—I. Saints are safe—“ *surely,*” (verse 3). II. The evil is bounded—“ *only,*” (verse 8). III. The Lord has reasons for preserving his own—“ *because,*” (verse 9).

Verse 4.—I. The compassion of God. II. The confidence of saints. III. The panoply of truth.

Verses 5, 6.—I. The exposure of all men to fear. 1. Continually, day and night. 2. Deservedly: "conscience doth make cowards of us all." II. The exemption of some men from fear. 1. Because of their trust. 2. Because of the divine protection.

Verse 7.—How an evil may be near but not nigh.

Verse 8.—What we have actually seen of the reward of the wicked.

Verses 9, 10.—I. God our spiritual habitation. II. God the keeper of our earthly habitation. III. General truth that the spiritual blesses the temporal.

Verse 10.—I. The Personal Blessing. II. The Domestic Blessing. III. The connection between the two.

Verses 14—16.—The six "I wills."

Verses 11, 12.—A "wrested" Scripture righted. I. Satan's version—presumptuousness. II. The Holy Spirit's version—trustfulness.—*Charles A. Davis.*

Verses 11, 12.—I. The Ministry of Angels as employed by God. 1. Official: "he shall give," etc. 2. Personal: "over thee." 3. Constant: "in all thy ways." II. As enjoyed by man. 1. For preservation: "shall bear thee," etc.; tenderly but effectually. 2. Under limitation. They cannot do the work of God, or of Christ, or of the Spirit, or of the word, or of ministers, for salvation; "are they not all ministering spirits," etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 12.—Preservation from minor evils most precious because they are often most grievous, lead to greater evils, and involve much damage.

Verse 13.—The believer's love set upon God.

Verse 13.—I. Every child of God has his enemies. 1. They are numerous: "the lion, adder, young lion, dragon." 2. Diversified: subtle and powerful—"lion and adder;" new and old—"young lion" and the "old dragon." II. He will finally obtain a complete victory over them—"Thou shalt tread," etc.; "shall put thy foot," etc.; "the Lord shall bruise Satan," etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 14.—Here we have, I. Love for love: "Because," etc. 1. The fact of the saints' love to God. There is, first, love in God without their love, then love for their love. 2. The evidence of his love to them: "I will deliver him"—from sin, from danger, from temptation, from every evil. II. Honour for honour. 1. His honouring God. "He hath known my name" and made it known; God honouring him; "I will set him on high"—high in honour, in happiness, in glory.—*G. R.*

Verses 15, 16.—Observe. I. The exceeding great and precious promises. 1. Answer to prayer: "he shall call," etc. 2. Comfort in trouble: "I will be with him." 3. Deliverance from trouble: "I will deliver him." 4. Greater honour after trouble: deliver "and honour him." 5. Length of days; life long enough to satisfy him. 6. God's salvation: "shew him my salvation;" far beyond what man could think or desire. II. To whom these promises belong; who is the *he* and the *him* to whom these promises are made. He "calls upon God," says the fifteenth verse; he "hath known my name," says the verse preceding; he "hath set his love upon me," says the former part of the same verse; he "has made the Lord his habitation," says the ninth verse; he "dwelleth in the secret place of the most High," says the first verse. Hannah More says, "To preach privileges without specifying to whom they belong is like putting a letter in the post-office without a direction." It may be very good and contain a valuable remittance, but no one can tell for whom it is intended. All the promises of Scriptures are plainly directed to those to whom they belong. The direction put upon the promises of this Psalm is unmistakably clear and often repeated.—*G. R.*
